practically the whole of the life of the people in different spheres. I shall make an earnest appeal to you to make a response to the command in the spirit in which it has been issued and to try for yourselves whether co-operation is not more fruitful than mere non-co-operation, when you are called upon not merely to pass resolutions. But to recommend definite proposals for the amelioration of your fellow citizens."

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The status of cultivators of land, whose condition was little better than that of serfs before the introduction of Settlement of land, has been improved considerably. The maximum State share of revenue is fixed at 30 per cent. of the gross produce, and suspensions and remissions are granted from time to time. The term of a Settlement has been extended to 40 years. Long before the establishment of the Praja Sabha, His Highness had studied conditions of life in the interior of the State by extensive tours. He had also introduced an effective method of keeping in touch with the rural population through conferences of the representatives of each Tehsil in Jammu and Kashmir held annually at the headquarters of the Government. This form of consultation with popular representatives gave His Highness a more intimate knowledge of the real needs and requirements of the masses. As a result of the representations made at these conferences and the discussions that followed, attention was directed towards the improvement of means of communication in the villages, improvement of livestock, grant of cultivable land as *muafee* and provision of more facilities for education and medical relief in the villages. The Agriculturists' Relief Act was enacted, several years before the institution of the Praja Sabha, to protect the agriculturists from the extortion of money-lenders who charged high rates of interest, and was the first of a series of legislations for the protection of the agriculturists. It prescribed the maximum rates of interest and empowered the courts to examine the accounts of a loan and to fix instalments for discharging debts on the basis of the paying capacity of the debtor. Special *ailans* were issued declaring agricultural holdings, livestock, agricultural implements, seeds, etc., as non-attachable for redemption of

426 decree by civil court. About 4,000 co-operative credit societies with a working capital of about Rs. 1 crore [646] provide facilities for credit to agriculturists. The Praja 423 Sabha has a good record of progressive laws passed ever since its inception. ½ The Right of Prior Purchase Act has imposed restrictions on the alienation of agricultural lands, and recognised the right of pre-emption among agriculturists in respect of such land. The Land Alienation Act has further protected the interests of the agriculturists, and stopped transfer of agricultural land to non-agriculturists. 426 The agricultural classes have been defined. The Aid to the Agriculturists and Land Improvement Act provides for grants of loans for improvement of land and relief of distress and the repayment of these loans by easy instalments. In special circumstances under this Act, the payment of particular instalments of a loan may be suspended 451 and even free aid may be granted. The *Kaksharai* Act removed inequalities in the incidence of the *kaksharai* tax, and granted exemption to owners of livestock in respect of particular animals of a given age. Before the enactment of this measure, relief had been granted to owners of livestock by executive action in a number of ways. The *sambardari* cess formerly realised on 423 nomadic animals was remitted. Proprietary rights have been conferred on the *asamis* in Kashmir Province and in the Frontier districts, as well as on occupancy tenants in Jammu Province. But the one concession which has substantially added to the resources of village communities throughout the State is the *Rajiilah* boon already mentioned regarding grant of *khalsa* land to the *zamindars* concerned up to cent. per cent. of their holdings. Several *ailans* have been issued to ensure that the boon is properly 313 implemented. Reference has also been made to the extension of rights of the inhabitants of villages in regard to products of forests bordering on these villages. Recently His Highness' Government have further extended these rights on the recommendation of the Forest Enquiry Committee. Millions of cubic feet of timber and fire-wood are every year removed by *zamindars* from the forests free of charge. Forest products are also sold to *zamindars* at concession rates. Forest industries [463] and rearing of cocoons provide employment to tens of thousands in the villages.

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½ [in 1934 -- Analyst]